

1. A remote access system for a secure computer network, comprising:

an intermediary operative in conjunction with a network entity distinct from said secure computer network; and

10        said manager and said intermediary are capable of  
      establishing secure communications therebetween,

said manager is operative to convey said directive to  
15 be executed to said intermediary and said agent is operative  
to receive said directive to be executed from said  
intermediary prior to executing said directive.

3. The system of claim 2, wherein said intermediary is operative to forward said results of said executed directive to said manager subsequent to said return of said results to said intermediary by said agent.

4. The system of claim 1, wherein said agent is operative to block pending receipt of said directive to be executed from manager via said intermediary.

5. The system of claim 1, wherein said agent and said intermediary are capable of authenticating each other prior to establishing said secure communications therebetween.

5 6. The system of claim 1, wherein said manager and said intermediary are capable of authenticating each other prior to establishing said secure communications therebetween.

7. The system of claim 6, wherein said agent is capable of  
10 providing a password to said intermediary for subsequent comparison by said intermediary with a password provided by said manager.

8. The system of claim 6, wherein said agent is capable of  
15 providing said intermediary with a identifying data, said intermediary capable of providing said identifying data to said manager, and said manager capable of authenticating said intermediary based upon said identifying data.

20 9. The system of claim 1, wherein said manager is a web browser and said intermediary is a web server.

10. The system of claim 1, further comprising a first data pathway between said agent and said intermediary and a  
25 second data pathway between said intermediary and said agent, wherein at least one of said first and second data pathways is comprised of the Internet.

11. A method of remotely servicing a secure computer  
30 system, comprising:

executing, by said agent, said directive to executed.

16. The method of claim 11, wherein said establishment of  
said first secure communications pathway between said  
30 manager and said intermediary comprises using a web browser  
as said manager and accessing a web server as said  
intermediary.

17. The method of claim 11, further comprising:

returning, by said agent, results of an executed directive to said intermediary; and

5 returning, by said intermediary, said executed directive results to said manager.

18. A remote servicing system intermediary for a secure computer system, comprising:

10 a web server communicable, over a first secure communications link, with a manager running on a management computer system and, over a second secure communications link, with an agent running on said secure computer system,

said web server capable of spawning a first sub-process  
15 for receiving, over said first secure communications link, a directive to be executed by said secure computer system, and

said web server capable of spawning a second sub-process for transmitting, over said second secure communications link, said directive to be executed by said  
20 secure computer system.

19. The intermediary of claim 18, further comprising memory for storing a password received from said secure computer system for use in validating said manager.

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20. The intermediary of claim 18, wherein said intermediary is operative to block pending receipt of said directive to be executed from said manager.

30 21. The intermediary of claim 18, further comprising a digital certificate to be conveyed to said agent and to said manager for authenticating said intermediary.

22. The intermediary of claim 18, further comprising an  
access database for defining which secure computer systems  
communicable with said intermediary said manager may define  
5 directives for.

23. The intermediary of claim 18, wherein said intermediary  
is operative to receive results of said executed directive  
from said secure computer system over said second secure  
10 communications link and is further operative to convey said  
results to said manager over said first secure  
communications link.

24. A method of operating an intermediary for the remote  
15 servicing of a secure computer system, comprising:

providing a first digital certificate to an agent  
running on said secure computer system in response to a  
request from said agent for the purpose of authenticating  
said intermediary to said agent;

20 storing identifying information received from said  
agent;

providing a second digital certificate to a manager in  
response to a request from said manager for the purpose of  
authenticating said intermediary to said manager;

25 receiving said identifying information from said  
manager for the purpose of authenticating said manager to  
said intermediary;

receiving, from said manager, a directive to be  
executed by said agent; and

30 forwarding said directive to said agent for execution.

25. The method of claim 24, further comprising:

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receiving results of said executed directive from said agent; and

forwarding said results to said manager.

5 26. The method of claim 24, further comprising:

storing a list of secure computer systems communicable with said intermediary and for which said manager may define directives to be executed.

10 27. The method of claim 24, further comprising:

15 establishing a first secure communications pathway between said intermediary and said agent in response to said agent authenticating said intermediary based upon said provision of said first digital certificate from said intermediary to said agent.

28. The method of claim 24, further comprising:

20 establishing a second secure communications pathway between said intermediary and said manager in response to said manager authenticating said intermediary based upon said provision of said second digital certificate from said intermediary to said manager and in response said receipt of said identifying information from said manager by said intermediary.

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